



CITY OF ATLANTA

SHIRLEY FRANKLIN
MAYOR

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June 24, 2008

Lisa Borders, President
Members of the Atlanta City Council
55 Trinity Avenue, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear President Borders and Members of City Council:

I hereby return my veto of Ordinance # 06-O-0038.

On June 16, 2008 the Atlanta City Council adopted Ordinance # 06-O-0038 that proposes to amend various sections of the Zoning Code of the City of Atlanta, for the purpose of clarifying and/or defining certain terms related to supportive housing; to provide how applications for such uses are to be processed; defining the term community center and removing certain redundant terms related to such use; redefining the conditions under which dormitories, sorority houses and fraternity houses are permitted; deleting rooming houses and boarding houses as permitted uses in certain districts; and for other purposes.

As stated in my previous letter of June 13, 2008, (attached) this legislation will have a profound impact on our ongoing efforts to create supportive housing, a direction that we have all agreed is essential in our goal of ending chronic homelessness. This legislation, would in effect, relegate certain categories of people to the most inaccessible neighborhoods and zoning districts in the City. Furthermore, this proposed law closely mimics the unfair actions from our country's sad past that promoted the despicable laws of segregation and Jim Crow. Supportive housing should be integrated and inclusive environments within established residential neighborhoods as stated in the State of Georgia Department of Human Resources' Provider Manual.

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The Atlanta City Council and this Administration have together led the metro Atlanta region in providing viable services to homeless individuals. We began with the establishment of the Regional Commission on Homelessness. This entity was created as an Atlanta initiative and over the past six years the City of Atlanta has been joined by an unprecedented seven counties with blueprints to end chronic homelessness. We didn't stop there -- with your assistance -- \$22 million of Homeless Opportunity Bonds were issued to the Atlanta Development Authority to administer for permanent supportive housing and assessment centers for women and children. The bonds help finance this much-needed housing around our City. We have our best agencies working mightily to provide the wrap-around services needed for homeless persons to work their way back to self-sufficiency.

We insist on utilizing superior service providers to help our consumers receive these quality services. Through our work, hundreds of homeless individuals have been assisted and are now living independently in their own housing. This positive work has to be continued.

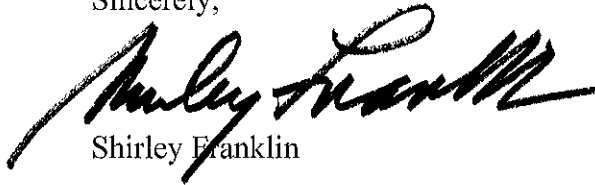
Let's be clear, supportive housing gives individuals an opportunity to identify their problems, develop positive personal and interpersonal skills and behaviors during their transition into mainstream services. These services help to restore and develop skills in functional areas such that individuals will improve their ability to maintain housing, participate in educational activities, regain or maintain employment, develop or maintain social relationships and manage resources. We have searched the best practices across the nation and we have found that homeless individuals are best served in neighborhoods in regular housing, *our supportive housing model*. We are not advocating the use of hotels or illegal boarding housing. We are advocating safe, secure and decent housing, the same essentials in which we expect.

We have used our moral authority to help, not hurt, people who many of us have known and need a second chance. We often discuss the issues of the voiceless - whether it's the cost of living, unemployment and underemployment. The supportive housing ordinance adopted on June 16th reverses the goodwill and solid practices we developed to find reasonable and fair ways to accommodate and move towards a City that cares enough to go the extra mile.

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I implore you to uphold my veto of this onerous piece of legislation and let us work, together, to pass legislation that will not discriminate against persons just because they are disabled or because they used to be homeless. Let us work collectively to get persons out of homelessness – not work to ensure they remain on the streets of Atlanta.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shirley Franklin", with a stylized, flowing script.

Shirley Franklin